



Some Unions

The Movement:

COSATU Affiliates and other unions (2012)

<u>COSATU Affiliate</u>	<u>Membership 2012</u>	<u>Total membership in previous years:</u>	
CEPPWAWU	80 658		<u>COSATU</u>
CWU	18 666	<u>Year</u>	<u>Membership</u>
DENOSA	74 883	1991	1 212 000
FAWU	126 930	1994	1 252 000
NEHAWU	260 738	1997	1 791 000
NUM	310 382	2000	1 869 000
NUMSA	291 025	2003	1 768 000

PAWUSA	17 146	2006	1 841 400
POPCRU	149 339	2007	1 812 569
SACCAWU	120 352	2008	1 870 537
SACTWU	85 025	2009	1 973 857
SADNU	8 655	2010	1 993 387
SADTU	251 276	2011	2 070 739
SAFPU	593	2012	2 191 016
SAMA	7 759		
SAMWU	153 487		
SASAWU	7 074		
SASBO	67 402		
SATAWU	159 626		
Total	2 191 016		

In South Africa, there is a constitutional right to freedom of association which in practice means, among other things, that workers have the right to combine together in trade unions.

This situation also means that, while worker unity is possible, it is also constantly threatened by the “right” of workers to split that unity by forming rival unions. In other words, if workers in a union do not like a majority decision, they are empowered by the law to walk out and start another (rival) union.

This freedom does not exist in the national democracy, where the minority losers of elections are obliged to live under the government of the majority and to obey the laws of the democratic Parliament.

Two unions are not better than one. Two unions organising the same kinds of worker are not united but are potentially divided and even potentially antagonistic.

In effect this leaves the matter of trade union democracy to be decided in action. If we can organise, we can stay united. If we get lazy, then opportunists, liars and demagogues will come in and take over. Not only will the law protect them, but the bourgeois mass media will also support them, even when they are obvious criminals and *de facto* fascists. We have seen this many times, and recently.

Presently, the South African Trade Unions can be analysed into two kinds: COSATU affiliates (see the tables above); and the others that are not COSATU affiliates. In COSATU a slogan is sometimes heard which says: “Any worker who is not a member of COSATU affiliate remains unorganised!” This is an aggressive stance towards non-COSATU unions.

The SACP is a vanguard party of the working class as a whole. It cannot abandon or shun workers who are in good-faith non-COSATU unions. But the SACP works hard for the goal of one-union-one-industry and one-country-one-federation.

COSATU, in practice, does co-operate with *bona fide* non-COSATU unions, for example in the Public sector collective wage bargaining system (PSCBC), which may involve as many as 17 unions, such as the ones whose logos are illustrated above. More than half of these are non-COSATU unions. In the past, they have at times been treated as, and behaved as, genuine trade unions and comrades in joint struggle.

But the constitutional and legal set-up that we have goes further to allow the appearance of what are actually fake unions,

masquerading as unions. The bourgeois media invariably sympathise with any anti-COSATU elements. The rise of “AMCU” is the latest example.

As this item was originally being prepared, the COSATU-affiliated National Union of Mineworkers were preparing for its Central Committee (23-24 May 2013). The NUM’s statement (attached) will illustrate the problem set by the AMCU marauders and the response of our comrades to that challenge, as well as normal trade union concerns including collective bargaining demands and safety.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [NUM Post Central Committee Press Briefing, 26 May 2013](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).